FINAL PROGRAM DESIGN
Veterans and Human Services Levy: 5.5
Facilitate the Homeless Management Information System ("Safe Harbors")

1. **Goal (Overarching Investment Strategy)**
   The Veterans and Human Services Levy Service Improvement Plan (SIP) set a goal of increasing the effectiveness of resource management and evaluation (page 27 of the SIP).

2. **Objective (Specific Investment Strategy)**
   Information Systems: Facilitate the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) (page 28 of the SIP).

3. **Population Focus**
   This homeless management information system initiative will help our region determine the nature, patterns, and extent of homelessness in order to better determine the treatment, housing and supportive service needs of homeless people, which include veterans and their families as well as others in need. The HMIS captures client and services data from 86 percent of all shelter and transitional beds in King County serving homeless individuals and families.

4. **Need**
   Background
   Safe Harbors is the region's management information system for services for people who are homeless. The program is a collaboration between King County, the City of Seattle (Human Services Department), and United Way of King County. A county-wide HMIS or data collection system is a requirement for receiving enhanced levels of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) McKinney Vento funding and in 2008, State 2163 Homeless Services funding.

   The county-wide homeless Continuum of Care is comprised of 251 programs and 8,478 beds serving families and individuals that could participate in the HMIS (not counting those programs that serve victims of domestic violence). Of these programs, 170 with 7341 beds (86.7 percent of all beds) are currently participating in Safe Harbors.

The current Safe Harbors application (referred to as Safe Harbors I) is functioning as a data collection tool, and is essential to meeting HUD requirements. The system currently has over 18,000+ records on 12,000+ clients served through June 30, 2007. The current application has limited ability to support other possible long-term system strategies such as: coordinated intake and referral, case management, or bed roster management. Therefore, the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) and Safe Harbors staff have been working together to select a new statewide HMIS vendor with improved software application to take the program into the future. Nationwide a number of vendors have emerged who can provide greater capabilities than even imagined three years ago, offering an increased ability to coordinate services throughout the system. The vendor will be selected by the end of 2007 and the migration to the new software will occur in mid-2008. The new system will build upon current data collection and software application, but will make it easier for shelters and homeless housing providers to enter and maintain data on the clients they serve.

Current Need
Agencies will need significant individual level support, both now with the current system, and through the implementation of the new system in the future:

A. *In the current system, Safe Harbors I (SH I), agencies need staff assistance to support quality assurance efforts, improve hands on training programs and improve business practices to ensure there is a complete and accurate data set through mid-year 2008.*

    This is important, because the data collected for 2007 and early 2008 will be migrated to the new system to complete the historical data record. It is essential that the data is accurate and managed properly to assure a successful conversion to the new system.

    Agencies need the one-time support in the form of data entry assistance, concurrent with implementing improved business processes, to ensure complete and accurate data is entered and maintained in a timely fashion.

    For example, in the first six months of 2007, participating agencies entered and maintained data on over 12,000 duplicated clients. As staff began to analyze the data to develop metrics for policy and performance, it became abundantly clear that the quality and completeness of data is extremely inconsistent even within agencies.

    Of the 12,000 client records, over 80 percent were missing significant elements, such as the 9,600+ which did not include education or employment data. Missing data often included critical information such as veterans' status, chronic homelessness, and type of disability.

    The Safe Harbors Project had exit data/forms on only 550 clients. The Safe Harbors Project staff believes an additional 900+ clients exited service but appear to be missing exit forms and outcomes forms.

B. *The change to implementation of the new system, Safe Harbors II (SH II) in 2008 will require significant effort from already overburdened agency Information Technology (IT) and data administration staff.*

While implementing the new system, all programs will continue to maintain current data efforts to meet ongoing funding and administration requirements. Safe Harbors staff have been informed by agencies that they have significant concerns about their capacity to meet current IT requirements while spending many hours in the implementation project.

C. *As the new system (SH II) begins to be implemented in mid-2008, all 170 current agency programs (about 200 users) will need hands-on training and assistance adapting agency business processes.*

At the point of bringing up the improved system, training and technical assistance will be required to migrate to this new system and utilize it effectively and efficiently. Agencies' ability to enter timely, accurate and complete data is critical to the Safe Harbors project and the region's major homeless housing and services policy makers. All staff will need retraining and modification of business practices to implement

D. *New King County-specific features yet to be determined (such as housing search or coordinated intake) will require modification of the basic system at our local level*

Safe Harbors agencies will incur one-time implementation costs when we modify local systems to provide services not part of the basic state-wide HMIS capability.

5. **Funds Available**
   2007: $350,000 ($105,000 Veterans Levy; $245,000 Human Services Levy)
   2008: $275,000 ($82,500 Veterans; $192,500 Human Service)
   2009: $200,000 ($60,000 Veterans; $140,000 Human Services)
   2010: $150,000 ($45,000 Veterans; $105,000 Human Services)
   2011: $150,000 ($45,000 Veterans; $105,000 Human Services)

6. **Program Description**
   The Levy project will focus specifically on providing resources that address homeless service agencies and providers needs discussed above. These needs are not covered by other funds (see table below). Specifically, levy funds will be used to:
   A. *Assist agencies to review and enter current and archival data in the existing HMIS.*
      Levy funds will be used to hire temporary data entry staff that will work with all publicly funded agencies to meet data entry requirements. Agencies needing the greatest help will be identified and prioritized by data review in January 2008 (building upon analysis to date). Temporary data entry staff will be recruited from agencies and programs who may have staff already trained. Additional efforts will be made to recruit and train disadvantaged staff from the participating programs.

   B. *Augment current agency data collection and services approaches to assist them to move to the new HMIS application.*

Levy funds will be used contract with three or four non-profit IT specialists to work within agencies as they pilot, then implement the new HMIS over the course of 2008. The IT specialists will be assigned first to six pilot programs in four agencies as they beta test the new HMIS. These specialists will perform configuration duties, monitor data and test data migration. Once the pilots are completed, these specialists will be assigned to subsequent agencies in line for implementing the new HMIS.

C. *Bring the new application on line within 170 participating programs (about 200 users) county-wide.*
The long term maintenance of the HMIS will require agency level staff to carry on the management and training function of the HMIS.

We anticipate a long term strategy where Safe Harbors staff and the vendor train key personnel in how to administer and manage the project in larger agencies. Safe Harbors staff will continue to support agencies in training and help desk support – especially smaller agencies.

However, the longer strategy will be to "train the trainers" within large agencies and reduce dependence on a centralized staffing model currently employed by Safe Harbors. At least 25 key staff in larger agencies will be identified through proposal request process. Safe Harbors will contract with the vendor and create a short-term instruction capacity (trainers, space, and equipment) to bring the key personnel up to speed on the new application.

D. *Use the improved technology in SH II to create new service coordination strategies for individuals and families (including veterans and others in need) across programs and agencies.*
Beginning in late 2008 Safe Harbors will work with programs and agencies to design new enhanced coordination strategies based on the capabilities of the new HMIS. Agencies will require enhanced modification of workflows, user interface and data structure to meet new anticipated service activities. These activities will likely include creating HMIS linkages to services, benefits programs, and other established service systems. County specific programs for veterans and homeless families will require unique workflows and capacity. There will be contractors costs incurred to develop King County specific applications and workflows.

Safe Harbors Budget and Use of Levy Funds vs. Other Fund Sources
In 2008 and 2009, Safe Harbors staff will be simultaneously responsible for maintaining the continued use of Safe Harbors I and bringing all existing users onto the new system. The Safe Harbors I HMIS will be required to meet mid-year 2008 reporting requirements and continued system coordination through 3rd quarter 2008.

As Safe Harbors II is implemented there will be tremendous effort required in system coordination, continuum-wide HMIS configuration, managing the transition to the new user license structure. Fees for state coordination under Safe Harbors I will be required through

mid-year. These costs will continue to a degree by state coordination of the new master use license.

Portions of existing funds and additional state funds will be required to pay for the ongoing user licenses for 200+ users on the new system. Every effort is being made to meet the simultaneous demands within existing resources available for ongoing HMIS costs.

Levy funds, which are time-limited and decline in the out years, will be used specifically to cover the one-time, or short-term, agency related costs of preparation for migration, including training key staff and mitigating the burden of implementation at the agency level.

Please refer to the tables below for the use of the funds in 2008 and 2009.

Safe Harbors Budget 2008	Total	Local 2163	State 2163	McKinney	Seattle	Levy Funds
Ongoing Salaries						
Program management, data integration, training and business processes, IT specialist user support,						
Total Salaries	$420,000	$70,000		$250,000	$100,000	
Technical Support						
Washington State CTED SH I and SH II Coordination	$100,000	$55,000		$45,000		
SH II Project Management	$25,000	$25,000				
Data Analysis Support	$85,000	$55,000		$30,000		
City of Seattle DoIT Checkpoint Review	$15,000			$15,000		
Agency User Expense						
Security Certificates	$15,000	$15,000				
SH II Users Licenses	$150,000		$150,000			
Other Admin	$134,113	$80,000		$54,113		
Short-Term Agency Implementation Support						
A. Agency Data migration support	$75,000					$75,000
B. Agency implementation, business process support	$125,000					$125,000
C. Agency level – training key HMIS administrators	$150,000					$150,000
D. In agency technical support, expansion of capabilities						
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$1,294,113**	**$300,000**	**$150,000**	**$394,113**	**$100,000**	**$350,000**

Safe Harbors Budget 2009	Total	Local 2163	State 2163	McKinney	Levy Funds
Ongoing Salaries Program management, data integration, training and business processes, IT specialist user support,					
Total Salaries	$427,000	$70,000		$357,000	
Technical Support					
Washington State CTED SH I and SH II Coordination	$50,000	$50,000			
Data Analysis Support	$55,000	$50,000			
Agency User Expense					
SH II Users Licenses	$150,000	$50,000	$150,000		
Other Admin	$109,875	$80,000		$29,875	
Short-Term Agency Implementation Support					
D. In agency technical support, expansion of capabilities					250,000
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	**$1,086,875**	**$300,000**	**$150,000**	**$386,875**	**$250,000**

7. **Timeline for Expenditure of Levy Funds**
   A. 1st Quarter 2008 through 2nd Quarter 2008: Provide agency level technical and clerical support to assist in comprehensive data entry and the revision of business processes, and to ensure a complete data set from all participating agencies is migrated from the current system to the new application. Use contract or temporary assistance. *$75,000 2007 Levy Funds*

   B. 1st Quarter 2008 through 3rd Quarter 2008: Use contracted support in agencies as they bring up and implement the system. The funds will be used to provide on-site technical support and implementation coordination. *$125,000 2007 Levy Funds*

   C. 1st Quarter 2008 through 4th Quarter 2008: Provide "Train the Trainer" resources for agency and program personnel at 25 agencies, train 200 users on new HMIS. *$150,000 2008 Levy Funds*

   D. 1st Quarter 2009 through 3rd Quarter 2009: Follow-up technical support, new application configuration, and technical resources to all agencies. *$250,000 2008 Levy Funds*

   Please note that the above strategies, while being implemented in 2008 and 2009, use only the 2007-2008 levy funds. Use of the 2009-2011 levy funds envisioned for Safe Harbors will be addressed in the second half of 2008, in an addendum to this program design paper.

8. **Coordination/Partnerships and Alignment Within and Across Systems**
   Safe Harbors is a collaboration of United Way of King County, King County and the City of Seattle. The HMIS is the central tool in the current and future coordination of all prevention, direct services and follow-up in permanent housing. The data is used to establish and monitor the metrics of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Currently there are over 170

programs, 87 agencies and 196 users trained and/or on the system. The HMIS is the long term technical resources required to create a coordinated and aligned homeless service system

9. **Selection of Projects/Activities**
   Contractors that provide agency level services will be procured either through competitive bid process, or taken from pre-approved IT contractor lists maintained by the City of Seattle Department of Information Technology (DoIT).

   All agencies will receive some assistance.
   - Agencies needing help entering their current and archival data into SH I will be identified and prioritized by a data review in December 2007.
   - In the transition to SH II, contracted IT specialists will first work with six pilot programs in four agencies. These pilot programs and agencies have already been identified because they represent the range of different participating programs/agencies. They are the Archdiocesan Housing Authority, Solid Ground, the Compass Center, and Child Care Resources. The specialists will then move on to work with other agencies.
   - For the "train the trainers" strategy, at least 25 key staff in larger agencies will be identified through a request for proposal process. (Safe Harbors staff will continue to train staff in smaller agencies when there is turnover.)

10. **Geographic Coverage**
    Programs throughout the county participate in Safe Harbors. All City of Seattle, King County and United Way-funded homeless service programs are required to participate. Most non-participating programs are faith-based and located in Seattle.

11. **Funding/Resource Leverage**
    The Safe Harbors budget is derived from a variety of HMIS designated sources. Sources are secured through 2009. King County Levy funds will be targeted towards one-time or short term expenses to support the transition from the current Safe Harbors system to the new HMIS vendor and application. See table below for a full list of funding sources.

Safe Harbors Budget	Total SH 2008	Total SH 2009
McKinney I	$102,500	$289,500
McKinney II	$194,238	
McKinney III	$97,375	$97,375
Washington State 2163 Funds	$300,000	$300,000
City of Seattle	$100,000	
Special CTED Allocation 2163 funds	$150,000	$150,000
Total Operating Revenues	$944,113	$836,875
Agency Support		
King County Vets/HS Levy (pending)	$350,000	$250,000
Total Revenues	$1,294,113	$1,086,875

12. Disproportionality Reduction Strategy

Homelessness affects minority populations to a greater degree than whites. In the first 2007 analysis only 43 percent of individuals and 39 percent of members of homeless families served by the system are white. The Safe Harbors project is designed to create coordinated access and information across all systems. The initial data shows who is being served, by whom and where throughout the county.

Safe Harbors staff are able to analyze patterns of service use, length of time in the system by ethnicity and minority status. This information is coupled with assessment of specific service needs and barriers to success in permanent housing. The data tell the story about need – to ensure the right resources are available to overcome increased barriers present due to ethnicity. The HMIS will be a tool to illuminate where the system or policy fails to serve populations effectively or appropriately. This information begins to make the case for where resources need to be located for maximum effectiveness and reducing disproportionality.

13. Dismantling Systemic/Structural Racism

Recent specific outreach and training efforts have included Muslim Housing Association, El Centro De La Raza, United Indians of All Tribes – all minority-based service agencies. The project is learning how technology may be used to improve the effectiveness and organizational capacity of minority based agencies.

14. Cultural Competency

Safe Harbors staff conduct outreach to all agencies on a case by case basis to assist them in using the system. All forms have been translated into Spanish and Somali. Participating agencies identify special language and/or culture needs in order to improve the quality of materials.

15. Improvement in Access to Permanent Housing and Supportive Services

Safe Harbors HMIS will improve access to permanent housing and supportive services in at least four ways:
1. In 2008, permanent housing programs for the homeless will be required to participate in the HMIS as a contract requirements -- expanding program participation and direct client access by those in the emergency shelter and transitional housing system;
2. Enhanced coordination of services between programs will improve referral and follow-up capability;
3. Data analysis of services trends will allow policy makers to understand effective strategies and improve linkages between programs and clients most likely to benefit from services;
4. Data analysis will identify where strategies or housing approaches are not succeeding – helping us redirect resources appropriately.

16. Outcomes
The outcomes expected from this investment of levy funds in Safe Harbors are:
- Improve agencies' ability to meet data entry requirements on the existing system;
- Assist agencies with the transition to the new system effectively, efficiently, and in a timely manner;
- Ensure complete and comprehensive data migration from the existing to the new system.

17. Process and Outcome Evaluation
Process Evaluation: The Levy funded project will be evaluated for the quality of implementing the agency level support. Process measures will include:
- agency satisfaction with level of support for data entry in current HMIS
- agency satisfaction with support for transition to new HMIS system
- timeliness of support to agency
- effective use of Levy funds
- improved business process to meet quality standards for participation in the HMIS

Outcome evaluation: How well the Safe Harbors Project achieve the outcomes listed in #17 above will be based on how well the following specific objectives are achieved (these may be further refined or added to):

- All agencies assisted in data entry and business process revision will demonstrate 100 percent entry of all required forms on clients served 1/1/2007 to 12/31/2007. Agencies will achieve 95 percent data accuracy in clients records submitted.

- Within 3 months of initiation with a new vendor, priority agencies assisted in conversion to new HMIS will have all current clients on the system and be able to use the system to conduct business.

- Within 4 months of initiation all current users will have been trained on the new HMIS and able to work with the HMIS in their agencies.

- Within 6 months from initiation the archival data set is able to be migrated to the new HMIS with less than 5 percent error rate on program level data.